

Bill Will Help Put Veterans to Work in Energy Fields

Washington, DC –Tuesday, Congressman Harry Teague’s Energy Jobs for Veterans Act passed the House. The bill, aimed at improving employment opportunities for veterans, seeks to establish programs to provide on-the-job training, apprenticeship, real experience, and long-term employment in all energy fields to veterans was passed the House on a vote of 397-19.

“This bill would ensure that those who fought for their country abroad would be able to continue their work for the security of our country when they return home – by getting a job, and a career, producing our energy right here in America,” said Congressman Harry Teague a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. “If you risked your life for your country, fighting enemies funded by foreign oil purchased with American dollars, then you can come home and continue your work for our national security – this time with a career in an energy industry.”

The bill comes amid a recent Department of Labor report that shows the unemployment rate for young Iraq and Afghanistan veterans has hit 21.1 percent. Non-veterans of the same ages, 18 to 24, face a 16.6 percent unemployment rate.

“So many of our veterans are finding it increasingly difficult to secure jobs after returning home,” said Congressman Harry Teague. “This bill not only helps our veterans find stable employment following their service, but also helps grow New Mexico’s energy industry and keeps energy production here at home.”

Funded by competitive grants, the program would reimburse energy employers for apprenticeship and on-the-job training provided to veterans. The program would be available to employers across multiple energy fields, including oil and gas, energy efficient building, construction and retrofits, renewable electric power, biofuel production, energy efficiency assessment, and nuclear power. Unlike other employment training programs for veterans, the Energy Jobs for Veterans Act ensures that a veteran has the security of employment while he or

she receives training and apprenticeship. Eligible employers are offered a strong incentive to hire a veteran because companies will be reimbursed for training.

The bill was introduced following a roundtable discussion with New Mexico Veterans that Congressman Harry Teague held in Valencia County focused on expanding job opportunities for Veterans.

The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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